

KARL GRIER

THE STRANGE STORY OF A
MAN WITH A SIXTH SENSE

VII. "Blood Is a Very Peculiar Juice"

By LOUIS TRACY

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YOU know what people think when a man screams out that a shark is threatening him from the black depths of the parquet flooring of a fashionable dining-room. And a shark is a most uncommon feature of such manifestations. Usually the disturbing vision is a rat, or a green imp with red eyes, or even a squirming snake. Indeed, reptiles figure so often in alchemical apertures that I often have wondered why there are not more frequent "scenes" in the London Strand owing to the presence on the curb of a number of street vendors who cause make-believe serpents to wriggle on a small board.

Several women rose with startled cries. A passing waiter was so unnerved that he dropped a laden tray, and the crash added to the alarm of those seated at a distance, to whom the hubbub, but not its cause, was audible. The band stopped playing, a clarinet breaking off with a jumpy squeak in the middle of a cadenza, and adding fuel each instant to the wild-fire commotion. Constantine spread over the table and yelled for snuff.

Wilhelm Stendal, convinced that his companion had suddenly gone mad, shouted that he was endowed with some of the grit essential to a scoundrel of any real importance. He picked up a canafe of red water and dashed the contents into the Armenian's gray-green face, being prepared to follow up the attack with the bottle itself if needed. He acted better than he knew. The physical shock of the liquid disrupted the magnetic influence which Karl had unctuously exercised on the man he had rescued from the Bay of Bengal. Furthermore, Constantine recovered his self-possession. He mopped his dripping face with a serviette, apologized to the astounded manager and those diners seated near, and went out, followed by Stendal.

The latter was too flustered to garnish his speech with Spanish phrases, a habit he affected in order to disguise the Polish-Jew element in his composition. Indeed, his language now savored more of the Río de la Plata than of Spanish America.

"What blazes did you go 'n' kick up that sort of a commotion?" he growled, his shining face exuding oil in his excitement.

"I couldn't help it. I was overpowered by a devil's memory."

"It's a damned performance, anyhow. Seems to me it'll be all round N. York this. Stendal was out on a date and some drowsy-kid blighter who had got right into the country-side variety of jujubes."

"Look here, Stendal! I may be afraid of some things, but I have no fear of you. If you talk to me in that fashion, I'll smash your face!"

Constantine appeared so murderous that the Armenian started a race, and a student hall porter moved ponderously forward. Stendal felt that he had gone too far. The Armenian was too richly built to be doing wide because he had created a scene in a restaurant and spoiled a good dinner. So he said nothing more complacently.

"Don't get mad and me, don't argue. I only wanted to shake up your wife a bit. Come on! Home you have. Let's walk round to your hotel. You'll see I'm all right, I swear it! You scared the living day out of yourself!"

A few miles down New York Avenue our hero cut off a prettily defined and crowded avenue into a side street of almost complete quietude. The two passed into one of those ancient thoroughfares and were presently removed from the plane of the restaurant.

Stendal halted to light a cigarette. He said the Armenian correctly, "Tell you what? In a jiffy I thought of that girl has put you off. Your face!"

The synopsis of preceding chapters will be found at the end of this instalment on page 14

officials did not require an earthquake followed by a month's deliberation before they would undertake to provide the necessary facilities. It is exceedingly probable that in a few years the same instrument which permits speech and hearing over practically unlimited distance will carry a "seeing" apparatus as well. Will the scientific miracle be any the more explicable because a certain quantity of insulated copper wire intervenes between the persons seeing, hearing and speaking to each other?

I am tempted into this disquisition because as it happens, the direct outcome of the conversations between the two sets of men (than whom the

English-speaking world could scarce produce four persons more opposed in personal characteristics) was the introduction of myself, the writer of this memoir, into the affair. Early in life journalism had taken me to India, where I met Karl's father. He was a man after my own heart. Many times, when the business of his tea estate brought him to Calcutta, I had dined with him in the "Wilson Otel," the strange name by which alone the *ghar* *raza* knows the Great Eastern Hotel, or he had been carried off from the Red Road by me to my own sanctum overlooking Chawringhee and the tree-dotted maidan that stretches toward Fort William and the river.

And you will guess readily what we poor exiles talked of while the ice clinked in the long glasses and the blue smoke-rings of Bangalore cheroots rose to the ceiling—he of his wife and child, I of a deluded girl waiting in England until

the rupee recovered from the heat-wave which melted silver. Heavens! How we flung those topics back and forth like two tennis-players battering a ball! And we never bored each other. Each man was far too thankful to have a sympathetic listener to be weary of the other's stories.

So in that way I knew a great deal of Karl, and when—years having passed, and the aforesaid girl (the rupee having long since stashed itself at thirty-thousand) being gone to visit her mother in Devonshire with our young hopeful—I decided to indulge in a long-deferred trip to Oxford, it was natural I should seek out the son of my old Indian crony and ask him to guide my steps along the ancient paths of "the home of lost causes and impossible beliefs."

The odd thing was that no man in Britain was more prepared to give credence to Karl's "visions" than myself. I had long since read Sir William Macpherson's book and construed Frank Hooper's theory of the definite bounds of human inventiveness out of my own thought-producing laboratory. "That is to say, you believe *Nay!*" said old Mephisto when he wheeled Faust into signing his soul away with his own blood, and the same "peculiar juice" of the Celtic stream ran in Grier's veins and my own. Moreover, Grace had told me of the adventures of Grier in the matter of the Hutchinson raid and the saving of Constantine, so it was another of the strange coincidences of life that brought a note from me, encased in the Mitre Inn, to Karl at his college on the morning after his excursion to Stendal's office and the Broadway restaurant.

Grier and Hooper came to see me in the afternoon. Instead of admiring the phones of Oxford, I had the record of recent events poured into my willing ear as we sat together in my private sitting-room on the first floor. Dear me! How the years slipped back as I listened. The rounded教授的和蔼可亲的音容 of the English University town did not differ greatly from the dim murmur of the palatial cities on the left bank of the Hugus. What a mere handspan in a vanished



I Was Amazed at the New Feature of
Karl's Astounding Qualities